

SOSANT 9100B Recent Theory in Anthropology

University of Oslo, Autumn 2018

The Past in the Present: Recent Perspectives on Anthropology and History

Lecturers: Christian Krohn-Hansen and Ingjerd Hoëm

Time: The three days from Wednesday 21st November to Friday 23rd November 2018

Place: University of Oslo

5 ECTS

This three-day PhD course, organized by the Oslo Anthropology Department, treats a set of recent perspectives on the anthropology of history. Special emphasis will be placed on exploring the ideas and views of Charles Stewart and Stephan Palmié. In the course, we will read and discuss Stewart's *Dreaming and Historical Consciousness in Island Greece* (2017) and Palmié's *The Cooking of History: How Not to Study Afro-Cuban Religion* (2013). The books are different, but have two significant features in common: both explore a religious history and both give us a detailed, multi-faceted anthropology of history. The course's reading list contains in addition a group of articles and chapters drawn from three main sources: The Special Section "The Anthropology of History" which was published in the journal *HAAU* in 2016, and which was edited by Palmié and Stewart; the volume *Imperial Debris: On Ruins and Ruination* which was edited by Ann Stoler and appeared in 2013; and Daniel Knight's book *History, Time, and Economic Crisis in Central Greece*, from 2015.

A goal for the course is to be able to explore and discuss these recent anthropological works and perspectives in a solid dialogue with the course participants' own research interests, ethnographies, and findings. Much of the course will have the form of a seminar: the course will combine (a) short lectures by the instructors with (b) group discussions and (c) brief presentations by the participants of own perspectives / own doctoral work-in-progress.

Through the course the aim is to discuss questions like these:

- Why does the ethnographer need to care about the past? Or why should anthropologists study history?
- Do we need a (strengthened, intensified, expanded) anthropology of history?
- What is history? Or what is historical consciousness? How do actors make history? Or better put, perhaps, how can anthropologists and historians and others most usefully inquire into the very

idea of history – the assumptions, principles and practices that inform the acquisition of knowledge about the past, and its social presentation?

- What is the power in the story? What is the power of that which is silenced or forgotten?
- What is the relationship between religious beliefs and practices and history?
- What has characterized anthropology's relationship to history?

Participants and organization: The course will be taught by Christian Krohn-Hansen and Ingjerd Hoëm. It will combine lectures, theoretical discussions, and engagement with PhD students' work-in-progress. While lectures and discussions will focus on parts of the works on the reading list, the central focus will be the students' own ethnographies and doctoral works. The course is therefore targeted at participants who have returned from their fieldwork.

Preparations: Before the course starts the 21st of November, each participant should have read the works on the reading list and have handed in a brief preparatory text of 1-2 pages (maximum 2 pages) where he or she presents aspects of the doctoral project and reflects a bit on the relationship between the project (or an aspect of the project) and a feature of the course or the works on the reading list. In addition each participant will make a short (5-10 minutes) presentation in class of their ongoing work, related to or extending the preparatory 1-2 page text. Further instructions for these activities will be circulated in September-October.

REQUIRED READINGS:

Two monographs:

Stephan Palmié (2013) *The Cooking of History. How Not to Study Afro-Cuban Religion*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. (265 pages)

Charles Stewart (2017) *Dreaming and Historical Consciousness in Island Greece*. With a New Preface. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. (230 pages)

Seven articles and chapters:

From The Special Section "The Anthropology of History" in *Hau: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, 2016, 6 (1):

- 1) Stephan Palmié and Charles Stewart (2016) "Introduction. For an anthropology of history", *Hau*, 6 (1): 207-236.
- 2) Richard Handler (2016) "Mining the time-space matrix: Commemorative postage stamps and United States World's Fairs, 1893-1915", *Hau*, 6 (1): 293-316.

From Ann Stoler, ed. (2013) *Imperial Debris. On Ruins and Ruination*:

- 3) Ann Stoler (2013) "Introduction. 'The Rot Remains': From Ruins to Ruination", in Stoler (ed.) *Imperial Debris*, pp. 1-35. Durham: Duke University Press.
- 4) Greg Grandin (2013) "Empire's Ruins: Detroit to the Amazon", in Stoler (ed.) *Imperial Debris*, pp. 115-128.
- 5) Sharad Chari (2013) "Detritus in Durban: Polluted Environs and the Biopolitics of Refusal", in Stoler (ed.) *Imperial Debris*, pp. 131-161.

In addition excerpts (two of the chapters) from Daniel M. Knight's (2017 [2015]) book *History, Time, and Economic Crisis in Central Greece*, London: Palgrave Macmillan (the hardcover edition was published in 2015, a paperback edition appeared in 2017):

- 6) Daniel M. Knight (2017) "Chapter 1. Introduction: Prosperity and Crisis", in his *History, Time, and Economic Crisis in Central Greece*, pp. 1-20.
- 7) Daniel M. Knight (2017) "Chapter 5. Things to Forget, Things to Remember: The Greek Civil War", in his *History, Time, and Economic Crisis in Central Greece*, pp. 85-100.

BELOW IS A LIST OF SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

(WE STRESS THAT THESE WORKS ONLY ARE MEANT AS SUGGESTIONS – THEY ARE NOT PART OF THE COURSE'S REQUIRED READINGS)

George Baca, Aisha Khan, and Stephan Palmié, eds. (2009) *Empirical Futures. Anthropologists and Historians Engage the Work of Sidney W. Mintz*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.

Ingjerd Hoëm (2005) "Stealing the Water of Life: The Historicity of Contemporary Social Relationships", *History and Anthropology*, 16(3): 293-305.

Daniel M. Knight and Charles Stewart (2016) "Ethnographies of Austerity: Temporality, Crisis and Affect in Southern Europe", *History and Anthropology*, 27(1): 1-18.

Christian Krohn-Hansen (2018) "State against Industry: Time and Labour among Dominican Furniture Makers", *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 24 (S1): 180-197.

Ann Stoler (2016) "Imperial Debris and Ruination", in Stoler *Duress: Imperial Durabilities in our Times*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 336-379.

Some classics:

B.S. Cohn (1987) *An Anthropologist among the Historians and Other Essays*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

J. Comaroff and J. Comaroff (1992) *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination*. Boulder: Westview Press.

E.E. Evans-Pritchard (1962/1961) "Anthropology and History", in Evans-Pritchard *Essays in Social Anthropology*. London: Faber & Faber.

O. Harris (1995) "'The Coming of the White People': Reflections on the Mythologisation of History in Latin America", *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 14(1): 9-24.

K. Hastrup, ed. (1992) *Other Histories*. London: Routledge.

R. Price (1983) *First-time: The Historical Vision of an Afro-American People*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

M. Sahlins (1985) *Islands of History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

P. Stoller (1995) *Embodying Colonial Memories: Spirit Possession, Power and the Hauka in West Africa*. London: Routledge.

M.-R. Trouillot (1995) *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Boston: Beacon Press.